Operator´s Manual

EC-5, EC-10, 20

Water Content Sensor

© UMS GmbH München
Art.Nr. 10HS
Version 09
Author: Decagon

©2009 Decagon Devices, Inc.
All rights reserved.

Decagon Devices, Inc.
2365 NE Hopkins Court
Pullman WA 99163
www.decagon.com

Vertreten in Deutschland durch:
UMS GmbH Gmunderstr. 37
D-81379 München
Tel. +49 (0) 89-12 66 52-0
Fax: +49 (0) 89-12 66 52-20
ums@ums-muc.de
www.ums-muc.de

Ansprechpartner:
Thomas Keller
Durchwahl: - 19
tk@ums-muc.de

Contents

1. Introduction 1

Welcome 1
Specifications 1
Contact Information 2
Warranty Information 3
Seller's Liability 3

2. About the EC-20, EC-10, EC-5 . .4

The EC-10 and EC-20 4
The EC-5 4
Sensor Features 5
Wiring Diagrams 5
3.5mm Plug Wiring 5
Wiring to Non-Decagon Dataloggers 6
Extended cable lengths 7

3. Installing the Sensors 8

Procedure 8
Orientation 10
Removing the Sensor 10

4. Collecting Data 11

Datalogger Requirements 11
Connecting to a Datalogger 12
Sample Program 12
SCWin (Short Cut) Directions 14
Calibration 15

Sensor Calibration Values 16
Troubleshooting 19

Declaration of Conformity 20

Index 21

1. Introduction

Welcome

Welcome to the EC-20, EC-10 and EC-5 sensors for measuring soil water content. These innovative sensors will enable you to monitor soil moisture accurately and affordably.

Specifications

Measurement Time: 10ms (milliseconds)
Accuracy:
EC-10 and EC-20:
± .04 m^3/m^3 (±4%) < 0.5 dS/m
With soil-specific calibration: ±.02 m^3/m^3 (±2%)
EC-5:
at least 0.03 m^3/m^3 all soils, up to 8 dS/m
With soil-specific calibration: ±.02 m^3/m^3 (±2%)
Resolution:
EC-10 and EC-20: 0.002m^3/m^3
EC-5: 0.001 m^3/m^3 VWC in mineral soils, 0.25% in growing media

Power:
Requirements:
EC-10 & EC-20: 2.5VDC @ 2mA to 5VDC @ 7mA
EC-5: 2.5VDC - 3.6VDC @ 10mA
Output: 10-40% of excitation voltage (250-1000mV at 2500mV excitation)

Operating Environment:
EC-10 and EC-20: 0 to 50°C
EC-5: -40 to +60 °C
Range of Measurement:
EC-10 and EC-20: 0 to 40% VWC
EC-5: 0 to saturation

Sensor dimensions:
EC-20: 25.4cm x 3.17cm x .15cm
EC-10: 14.5cm x 3.17cm x .15cm
EC-5: 8.9cm x 1.8cm x 0.7cm

Cable length: 5m standard, custom lengths or extension cables are available

Connector types: 3.5 mm plug or stripped and tinned lead wires
Datalogger Compatibility (not exclusive):
Decagon: Em5b, Em50 (and radio-enabled versions)
Campbell Scientific: CR10X, 21X, 23X, CR1000, CR3000, etc.

Contact Information

To contact Decagon for questions or customer support:

- **E-mail us at:** support@decagon.com
  sales@decagon.com
- **Fax us at:** 1-(509) 332-5158
- **Call us at:** 1-800-755-2751 in US and Canada only
  or 1-509-332-2756 International.

Warranty Information

The EC-20, EC-10 and EC-5 have a 30-day satisfaction guarantee and a one-year warranty.

Seller's Liability

Seller warrants new equipment of its own manufacture against defective workmanship and materials for a period of one year from date of receipt of equipment (the results of ordinary wear and tear, neglect, misuse, accident and excessive deterioration due to corrosion from any cause are not to be considered a defect); but Seller's liability for defective parts shall in no event exceed the furnishing of replacement parts F.O.B. the factory where originally manufactured. Material and equipment covered hereby which is not manufactured by Seller shall be covered only by the warranty of its manufacturer. Seller shall not be liable to Buyer for loss, damage or injuries to persons (including death), or to property or things of whatsoever kind (including, but not without limitation, loss of anticipated profits), occasioned by or arising out of the installation, operation, use, misuse, nonuse, repair, or replacement of said material and equipment, or out of the use of any method or process for which the same may be employed. The use of this equipment constitutes Buyer's acceptance of the terms set forth in this warranty. There are no understandings, representations, or warranties of any kind, express, implied, statutory or otherwise (including, but without limitation, the implied warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose), not expressly set forth herein.

2. About the EC-20, EC-10, EC-5

The EC-10 and EC-20

The EC-10 and EC-20 measure the dielectric constant of the soil in order to find its volumetric water content. Since the dielectric constant of water is much higher than that of air or soil minerals, the dielectric constant of the soil is a sensitive measure of water content. The EC-10 and EC-20 have a very low power requirement and high resolution. This gives you the ability to make as many measurements as you want (even hourly) over a long period of time (like a growing season, for example), with minimal battery usage.

The EC-5

The EC-5 varies from its EC-10 and EC-20 cousins. Although the principles of measurement are the same, its two-prong design and higher measurement frequency allows the EC-5 to measure VWC from 0 to 100% (VWC of saturated soils is generally 40-60% depending on the soil type) and allows accurate measurement of all soils and soilless medias and a much wider range of salinities.

Sensor Features

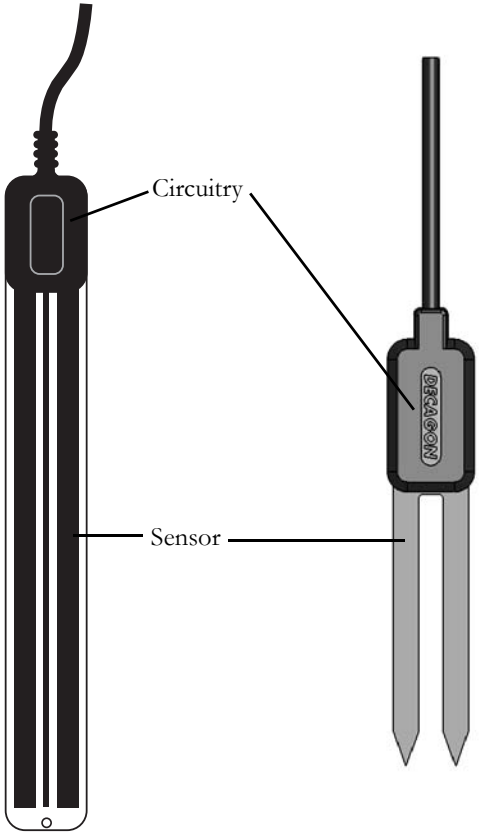


Fig.1: EC-20 diagram Fig. 2: EC-5 diagram

Wiring Diagrams

3.5mm Plug Wiring

The EC-20, EC-10 and EC-5 come with a 3.5mm "stereo plug" connector. This allows for rapid connection directly to Decagon's Em50 and Em5 logger and the

ECH_2O Check. Below is a diagram showing the wiring configuration for this connector.

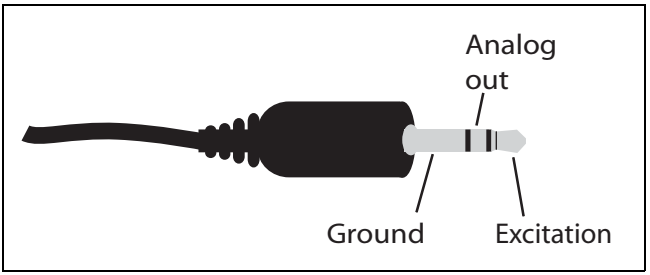


Fig. 2: 3.5mm "Stereo Plug" wiring configuration

Wiring to Non-Decagon Dataloggers

Models with stripped and tinned leads are pre-configured for connecting to non-Decagon dataloggers. Simply wire the lead into the datalogger as described in "Connecting to a Datalogger" in Chapter 4.

If your model uses the standard 3.5mm plug, you have two choices when attaching the sensor to non-Decagon dataloggers. First, you can clip off the plug on the sensor cable, strip and tin the wires, and wire it directly into the datalogger. This has the advantage of creating a direct connection with no chance of the sensor becoming un-plugged; however, it then cannot be used in the future with a Decagon Em50 or Em5 logger. The other choice is to obtain an adapter cable from Decagon. The 3-wire sensor adapter cable has a connector for the sensor jack on one end, and three wires on the other end for connection to a datalogger (this type of wire is often referred to as a "pigtail" adapter). Both the sensor wire and adapter cable wire have the same wire output

(shown in Fig. 3); the white wire is excitation, red is output, and the bare wire is ground.

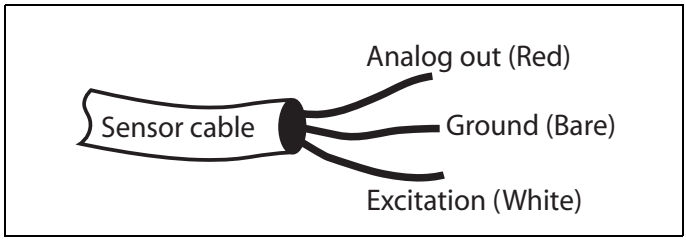


Fig. 3: 3-wire cable wiring configuration

Extended cable lengths

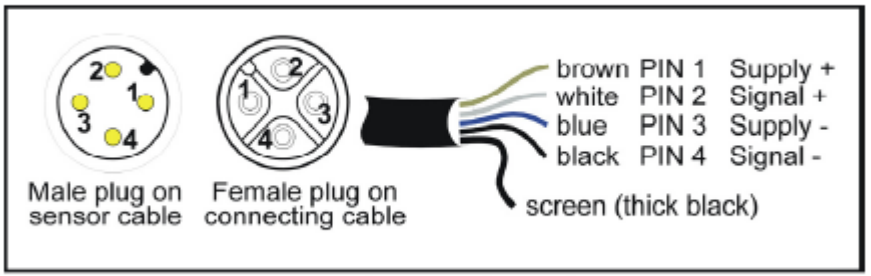
Decagon supplies 50-foot (15.25m) and 10-foot (3m) extension cables for use with the EC-20, EC-10 and EC-5 with the 3.5 mm connector . You can safely connect up to 4 of the 50-foot cables without signal attenuation. For most applications, you will want to seal the connections from the elements to maintain a good connection and to prevent corrosion. It is imperative that these connections are checked **before** the sensor is buried. Please see the Decagon web-site (www.decagon.com) for an application note detailing some preferred methods for waterproofing these connections

However, if possible, Decagon recommends that you purchase customized cable lengths if your project requires longer cable leads. Custom cable lengths may be requested with a 3.5mm connector or stripped & tinned end.

Extending sensor cables with UMS M12 cables

CC-4/1.5, CC-4/5, CC-4/10, CC-4/20
"Supply +" equates Excitation, "Supply -" equates Ground
(internal connected with "Signal -") "Signal +" equates Analog out

UMS plug M12/IP67



Pin and wire configuration for UMS connecting cable CC-4

© UMS GmbH München
Art.Nr. 10HS
Version 09/2008
Author: Decagon

3. Installing the Sensors

When selecting a site for installation, it is important to remember that the soil adjacent to the sensor surface has the strongest influence on the sensor reading and that the sensor measures the *volumetric* water content. Therefore any air gaps or excessive soil compaction around the sensor can profoundly influence the readings. Also, do not install the sensors adjacent to large metal objects such as metal poles or stakes. This can attenuate the sensor's electromagnetic field and adversely affect output readings. Because the EC-5 has gaps between its prongs, it is also important to consider the size of the media you are inserting the sensor into. It is possible to get sticks, bark, roots or other material stuck between the sensor prongs, which will adversely affect readings. Finally, be careful when inserting the sensors into dense soil, as the prongs will break if excessive sideways force is used when pushing them in.

Procedure

When installing the EC-20, EC-10 and EC-5, it is best to maximize contact between the sensor and the soil. There are two methods to accomplish this.

For the EC-10/EC-20:

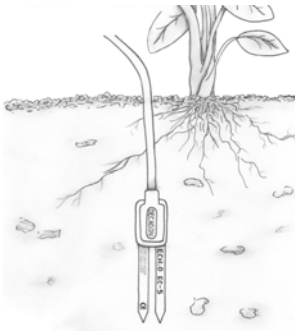
1. Use Decagon's Installation Kit to install the sensor. This kit has a custom-shaped blade to make the insertion in the soil, then another tool to place the sensor into the insertion. For deeper installations,

use an augur to reach the desired depth, then use the Installation Kit with extension rods to install the sensor.

2. Use a thin implement like a trenching shovel, gardening spade, or flat bar to make a pilot hole in the soil. Then insert the sensor into the hole, making sure the entire length of the sensor is covered. Finally, insert the shovel again into the soil a few inches away from the sensor, and gently force soil toward the sensor to provide good contact between the sensor and the soil. For deeper installation, excavate down to the level you wish to measure, then install the sensor as described.

For the EC-5:

1. The EC-5 sensor was designed for easy installation into the soil. After digging a hole to the desired depth, push the prongs on the sensor into undisturbed soil at the bottom of the hole or into the sidewall of the hole. Make sure that the prongs are buried completely up to the black overmolding, as shown below.



The sensor may be difficult to insert into extremely compact or dry soil. If you have difficulty inserting the sensor, try loosening the soil somewhat or wetting the soil. ***Never pound it in!***

2. Carefully backfill the hole to match the bulk density of the surrounding soil. Be careful not to bend the black overmolding connecting the sensor to the cable.

Orientation

The sensor can be oriented in any direction. However, orienting the flat side perpendicular to the surface of the soil will minimize effects on downward water movement.

Removing the Sensor

When removing the sensor from the soil, ***do not pull it out of the soil by the cable!*** Doing so may break internal connections and make the sensor unusable.

4. Collecting Data

Datalogger Requirements

The EC-20, EC-10 and EC-5 sensors are designed to work most efficiently with Decagon's 5-channel Em5b, Em50, ProCheck or ECH$_2$O Check handheld readout. All Decagon readout devices use either a 3.0V or 5V excitation.

The sensors however, may be adapted for use with other dataloggers, such as those from Campbell Scientific, Inc., for example. The EC-10 and EC-20 sensors require an excitation voltage in the range of 2 to 5 volts. The EC-5 requires an excitation voltage in the range of 2 to 3.6 volts. The sensors produce an output voltage that depends on the dielectric constant of the medium surrounding the sensor, and ranges between 10 and 50% of the excitation voltage. Any datalogger which can produce a 2.5 to 5V (2.5 to 3.6V for EC-5) excitation with approximately 10 millisecond duration and read a volt-level signal with 12-bit or better resolution should be compatible with the EC-20, EC-10 and EC-5 sensors. For the EC-10 and EC-20 sensors, the current requirement at 2.5V is around 2mA, and at 5V it is 7-8mA. For the EC-5, it is 10mA at 2.5V.

NOTE: *EC-20, EC-10 and EC-5 are intended only for use with dataloggers and readout devices which can provide short excitation pulses, leaving the sensors turned off most of the time. Continuous excitation not*

only wastes battery power, but may, under certain circumstances, cause the sensor to exceed government specified limits on electromagnetic emissions.

Connecting to a Datalogger

Connect the wires to the datalogger as shown, with the supply wire connected to the excitation, the analog out wire to an analog input, and the bare ground wire to ground:

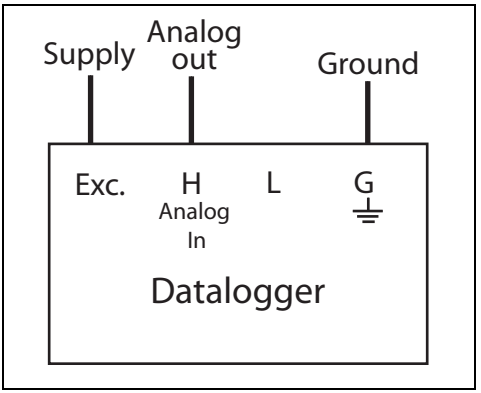


Fig. 5: Datalogger configuration

Sample Program

The following program is an example that can be used with Campbell Scientific's CR10X datalogger and our EC-20, EC-10 & EC-5 sensors at a 2500mV excitation:

```
;{CR10X}
;   Example ECH2O Datalogger Program for CR10X

;   Wiring:
```

```
;   White: Excitation Channel 1
;   Red: Input Single Ended Channel 1
;   Black: Ground

*Table 1 Program
  01: 1         Execution Interval (seconds)

;   Factory calibration equations for ECH2O
;   probes convert mV output of ECH2O to
;   volumetric water content (VWC, m3/m3)

;   EC-20:  VWC = 0.00069 * mV - 0.29
;   EC-10:  VWC = 0.00093 * mV - 0.376
;   EC-5:   VWC = 0.00119 * mV - 0.400

;   The multiplier and offset in this
;   example are for the EC-5

1:  Excite-Delay (SE) (P4)
 1: 1        Reps
 2: 5        2500 mV Slow Range
 3: 1        SE Channel
 4: 1        Excite all reps w/Exchan 1
 5: 1        Delay (0.01 sec units)
 6: 2500     mV Excitation
 7: 1        Loc [ Probe_VWC ]
 8: .00119   Multiplier
 9: -.4      Offset

*Table 2 Program
  02: 0.0000    Execution Interval (seconds)

*Table 3 Subroutines

End Program
```

SCWin (Short Cut) Directions

Following are instructions for using our SCWin (Short Cut) program to read EC-5, EC-10 and EC-20 soil moisture sensors.

1. Download EchoCSI.zip from http://www.decagon.com/appnotes/EchoCSIappnote.pdf.
2. Unzip the folder EchoCSI.zip.
3. Locate the file containing SCWin.exe. It should be in C:\Program Files\Campbellsci\SCWin. Place the following files from the unzipped EchoCSI.zip folder into the folder with SCWin.exe:

   AM1632Z.MUX
   AM416Z.MUX
   EC10.SCS
   EC101632.SCS
   EC10416.SCS
   EC20.SCS
   EC201632.SCS
   EC20416.SCS
   EC5.SCS
   EC5632.SCS
   EC5416.SCS
   SCWIN-DECAGON.CNT
   SCWIN-DECAGON.HLP

Note: *If you are not able to find this directory path, search for the folder that contains SCWIN.exe and place the files into that folder.*

4. Open up SCWin.exe (Short Cut). If you are using a V.3 copy of LoggerNet, there is a tab for SCWin (Short Cut) on the tool bar.

5. Select "New" to start a new program to read the EC-20, EC-10 and EC-5.
   a. Select the datalogger you will be using to read the sensors.
   b. Select the measurement interval (a shorter measurement interval, i.e. 1 sec., is sometimes desirable when testing the sensor).
6. Click on Sensors (this should open a new page with a file tree on it).
7. Under the "Sensors" file tree, double-click on "Meteorological" and then select "Soil Moisture."
8. ECHO Probe EC-10 and ECHO Probe EC-20 should appear on the tree along with other soil moisture sensors.
   a. If they don't appear, check to make sure you have pasted the files above into the correct location.

Calibration

Decagon's ECH_2O Utility, ECH_2O Utility Mobile, and DataTrac automatically apply factory calibrations to the sensors' output data. However, this general calibration may not be applicable for all sensors and all soil types. While the factory calibrations for the EC-5 is appropriate for almost all soil types, the standard calibrations for the EC-20 and EC-10 sensors do not perform in soils with high sand or salt content. Therefore, for added accuracy we encourage our customers to perform soil-specific calibrations.

The calibration equation that you will use depends on where you will be using it. If you will be using it with

sensors connected to a non-Decagon datalogger you will need to use the 2500 mV calibration. If you use any Decagon software (DataTrac, ECH$_2$O Utility, etc.) or the user calibration menu in the ECH$_2$O Check, you will need to use the RAW calibration. The difference between the two is the slope constant. To increase the resolution of the sensor output, Decagon uses all available increments of the 12-bit number (value of 4096) where the measurement is stored. Thus, the output of the sensors read by the ECH$_2$O Check and Decagon loggers must be multiplied by 0.61 AND the 2500 mV slope to give the right value.

Sensor Calibration Values

Following is a list of the both the millivolt and RAW calibration values for the EC-20, EC-10 and EC-5, where θ is the volumetric water content, mV is the millivolt output of the sensor, and where *x* is the RAW sensor output.

EC-20:
2500mV: θ (m^3/m^3) = 0.000695mV - 0.29
RAW: θ (m^3/m^3) =0.000424 x - 0.29

EC-10:
2500mV: θ (m^3/m^3) = 0.000936mV - 0.376
RAW: θ (m^3/m^3) = 0.000571 x - 0.376

EC-5:
The EC-5 is much less sensitive to variation in texture and electrical conductivity because it runs at a much higher measurement frequency. Therefore, its general calibration equation should apply for all mineral soils up

to 8 dS/m. Its calibration equations are shown below for mineral soil, potting soil, and rockwool growing media:

Mineral Soils

According to our tests, a single calibration equation will generally suffice for all mineral soil types with electrical conductivities from 0.1 dS/m to 10 dS/m. Volumetric water content (ø) is given by

$$ø = 8.5 * 10^{-4} * Raw - 0.48 \quad (1)$$

where *Raw* is the output from the Decagon datalogger using 3V excitation. If you are using a non-Decagon datalogger, VWC is given by

$$ø = 11.9 * 10^{-4} * mV - 0.401 \quad (2)$$

where mV is the output of the sensor when excited at 2500 mV. Please note that the equation will reach a maximum at ~60% volumetric water content (VWC) in pure water. To display data on a scale from 0 to 100%, VWC should be modeled with a quadratic equation (which would result in a 100% VWC in water), but a linear equation fits the mineral soil VWC range as well as the quadratic, and linear equations are easier to deal with, especially since mineral soil typically saturates at ~40 - 50% VWC.

Potting soil

The following equations can be used to convert EC-5 output to water content in potting soil. We tested several types of potting soil (Sunshine mix, Miracle Grow Pot-

ting Mix, and Custom Nursery soil) at several salinities and found that VWC is given by

$ø = 7.2 * 10^{-4} * Raw - 0.393$(3)

for a Decagon datalogger or

$ø = 10.3 * 10^{-4} * mV - 0.334$ (4)

for a datalogger with 2500mV excitation.

Rockwool

The EC-5 was calibrated in Grodan Master rockwool with solution electrical conductivities of 0.2, 1.0, 1.5, 2.0, and 4.5 dS/m. Volumetric water content can be calculated using

$ø = 6.28 * 10^{-7} * Raw^2 + 1.37 \times 10^{-4} * Raw - 0.183$(5)

for a Decagon datalogger or

$ø = 2.63 * 10^{-6} * mV^2 + 5.07 \times 10^{-4} * mV - 0.0394$(6)

for a datalogger with 2500 mV excitation.

NOTE: *These calibration constants only apply to 2500mV excitations; use of these numbers with any other excitation voltage will result in erroneous readings***!**

Troubleshooting

If you encounter problems with the EC-20, EC-10 and EC-5, they most likely will manifest themselves in the form of incorrect or erroneous readings. Before contacting Decagon about the sensor, do the following:

- **Check to make sure the connections to the datalogger are both *correct* and *secure*.**
- **Ensure that your datalogger's batteries are not dead or weakened.**

If you encounter problems that aren't due to the datalogger, please contact Decagon at **(509) 332-2756** and at **support@decagon.com**.

Declaration of Conformity

Application of Council Directive:89/336/EE6

Standards to which conformityEN61326 : 1998
is declared:EN51022 : 1998

Manufacturer's Name: Decagon Devices, Inc.
2365 NE Hopkins Court
Pullman, WA 99163 USA

Type of Equipment: ECH_2O soil moisture sensor

Model Number: EC-10, EC-20, EC-5

Year of First Manufacture:2001

This is to certify that the EC-10, EC-20 and EC-5 ECH_2O soil moisture sensor, manufactured by Decagon Devices, Inc., a corporation based in Pullman, Washington, USA meets or exceeds the standards for CE compliance as per the Council Directives noted above. All instruments are built at the factory at Decagon and pertinent testing documentation is freely available for verification.

Index

A

Accuracy 1

C

Calibration
- for EC-10 16
- for EC-20 16
- for EC-5 16
- for mineral soil 17
- for potting soil 17
- for rockwool 18

Contact information 2

D

Datalogger 2
- connecting to 12
- requirements 11
- sample program 12

Declaration of conformity 20

E

EC-10 4
EC-20 4
EC-5 4
- calibration 16

E-mail address 2
Extension cables 7

I

Installation 8
procedure 8
tips 8

M

Measurement range 2
Mineral soil
calibration 17

O

Orientation of sensor 10

P

Plug
wiring configuration 5
Potting soil 17
Power
requirements 1
Program 12

R

Range 2
Removing the sensor 10
Rockwool 18

S

Seller's liability 3
Sensor
calibration 15
installation instructions 8

orientation 10
specifications 1
Sensor orientation 10
Short Cut directions 14
Specifications 1

T

Troubleshooting 19

W

Warranty 3
Wiring diagram 5